

St. Mary and  
St. Peter's  
Church of England  
First School



Shepton Beauchamp  
Church of England  
First School



# CONSULTATION

on the proposal for  
**St Mary & St Peters Church of England VC First School**  
and  
**Shepton Beauchamp Church of England VC First School**  
to become

# PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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Chair of Governors  
St. Mary and St. Peter's  
Church of England First School

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Shepton Beauchamp  
Church of England First School

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## ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS

St. Mary and St. Peter's Church of England VC First School and Shepton Beauchamp Church of England VC First School are set in a beautiful part of South Somerset. St. Mary and St. Peter's school has two bases, four miles apart, each set in a rural village and has a total of sixty eight pupils on roll. Shepton Beauchamp is set in a neighbouring rural village and currently has forty five pupils on roll. Both schools share the same headteacher and work closely together. Both first schools are part of the three tier system which includes Swanmead Middle School in Ilminster and Wadham School in Crewkerne.

## WHY ARE WE PROPOSING TO CHANGE TO PRIMARY?

### Historical and current information regarding numbers

- There is a significant number of families in our catchment area who opt for the primary system for their children from foundation stage onwards instead of the three tier system.
- Some of the above families look around our schools and state that they would like their children to attend but when they are told about transfer at year five they do not come back to our settings.
- There has always been a small number of families who decide that when their children leave our schools they will continue their education in the primary system.
- The number of families who make the above decision is increasing yearly
- There is also a number of families who have recently made the decision to go into the primary system early to ensure a place in year five.
- The above move has also meant that younger siblings are moved at the same time which affects our school numbers further.
- The same above move has also had an impact on pre-schools.
- As a result of all the above our schools have seen an accelerating decline in numbers.
- Both our schools acknowledge that the school system is being and should be shaped by parents.

### Standards

- All our visitors state that our children are the best behaved from all the schools they visit, *'Learners clearly enjoy their education, behave well in lessons and are motivated to work independently'* *'Classes are managed well to create a calm and caring environment'*  
*School Improvement Partner Report 2007-2008 Shepton Beauchamp*
- We ensure that we meet the needs of all our children through a creative curriculum planned by the children and staff. This means that our children are engaged in their learning. Our pupil progress meetings, tracking and targeting ensure that everyone is fully informed about individual learning.
- The great majority of our children meet or exceed age related expectations at the end of year four. We deliver excellence and equity for all children. By expanding our upper age limit we know that we can boost standards and opportunities within our area.  
*'The leadership of the school is successfully focused on raising standards and achievements'*  
*School Improvement Partner Report 2007-2008 Shepton Beauchamp*  
*Current Standards have improved dramatically*  
*School Improvement Partner Report 2007-2008 St. Mary St. Peters*  
*'The strong leadership of the new headteacher drives the work of the school. She has high expectations to improve standards and achievement and shows no room for complacency'*  
*St. Mary and St. Peter's OFSTED November 2007*
- Both schools already meet the needs of groups of children, for example traveller children, children with individual needs and those who require extending.  
*'Strengths in pastoral care and the support given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities contribute much to pupils' good personal development and well being'*  
*OFSTED St Mary and St Peter's November 2007*
- Many of our children reach the expectations of year six before they leave us in year four.  
*'They vast majority exceed national expectation and all are pleased with their achievements'*  
*OFSTED Shepton Beauchamp February 2007*

## Church of England

- Both schools are Church of England Voluntary Controlled Schools. We would welcome the opportunity to have year five and six within our family and allow children to continue their education within our Christian setting.
- We share the same team vicar at two of our three settings and both he and his colleague at our third setting strongly support the retention of our year five and six children within their parishes.

## HOW CAN WE MEET THE NEEDS OF YEAR FIVE AND SIX IN OUR CURRENT SETTINGS?

### Finance

- Both schools have the capacity in terms of floor space/rooms to meet the needs of two additional year groups. This means that we do not need to consider any enlargement of buildings at the present time.
- Our class sizes are small and therefore we can meet the needs of additional year groups within our current staffing structure

### Curriculum

- Our current creative curriculum meets the needs of all learners and this can be extended into year five and six. The current headteacher has already used this curriculum in a very successful small village primary school  
*'The curriculum draws effectively on the local community and children are involved actively in planning for their own learning.'*  
*School Improvement Partner Report 2007 -2008 Shepton Beauchamp*  
*'The recent review of provision has produced a more creative curriculum that matches the interests of pupils far more closely, capturing the imagination and enjoyment of many'*  
*OFSTED St. Mary and St. Peter's November 2007*
- Both schools are extremely well resourced. We already achieve levels expected of year five and six pupils and therefore we have many resources already in place. However, there will be additional resources needed and these can be met from the existing school budget.
- We believe that we can meet children's needs in terms of physical education. At St. Mary and St. Peter's both bases have access to a field. At Shepton the nearby recreation ground can be used. Both schools already have a successful joint football team and have coaching from Yeovil Football Club. Children have been coached in a variety of sports.
- Children from Ilton and Barrington Bases at St. Mary and St. Peter's have whole school days. Shepton Beauchamp has whole school days and joins with St Mary and St Peter's at P.E festivals. It is envisaged that this will be extended for years five and six and there will be joint activities and learning on some occasions.
- Both schools have healthy schools status and have worked hard to embed the Social and Emotional Aspects of learning curriculum  
*'They are positive towards each other and resolve difficulties maturely. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and contribute effectively to the community'*  
*'Good quality care, guidance and support are seen in the high level of commitment of staff'*  
*School Improvement Partner Report 2007-2008 Shepton Beauchamp*  
*The outcomes of the good care can be seen in happy pupils who enjoy their lessons, behave well, feel safe and get on well together. They exercise frequently and have a good understanding of adopting a healthy lifestyle*  
*OFSTED St, Mary and St. Peter November 2007*
- The children's safety is always paramount in the curriculum  
*'Procedures for safeguarding the pupils are good and they feel safe and secure. The good levels of staffing ensures that the more vulnerable pupils receive the support and guidance they need to help them to succeed'*  
*School Improvement Partner Report Shepton Beauchamp 2007-2008*

- With co-operation between the schools we can ensure a wide range of after school clubs that are open to all children across the schools  
*'A wide range of enrichment activities take place after school.'*  
*School Improvement Partner Report Shepton Beauchamp and St Mary and St. Peter's 2007-2008*
- By changing to primary status we will be able to complete key stage two in our setting

### **Extended Schools**

- By increasing our upper age limit we will increase the number of children attending our school. We will open up all sites for clubs after school and carry out feasibility studies into breakfast, after school clubs and holiday clubs
- Both schools already signpost parents to other providers and work closely with pre-schools, child minders and the local children's centre in Langport.

### **Staff Expertise**

- Within both schools there are staff who have experience of teaching year five and six extremely successfully and in both schools there is a willingness to teach older children
- Across both schools there is subject expertise in all areas of the curriculum. If our schools became primary we could look at subject leadership across both schools

### **Classroom Organisation**

- Both schools are used to working flexibly as cohorts change in size. The schools firmly believe that mixed aged teaching is of great benefit to all children and would welcome the opportunity of including years five and six in this setting.
- Depending on the size of the cohorts, years five and six may be mixed with year four or even year three at times extending the range of learning and social opportunities for all.
- Both schools have very experienced teaching assistants. Between the schools we have three higher level teaching assistants. Some of our assistants have worked with years five and six in previous schools.

### **Information and Communication Technology**

- Both schools are well equipped to meet all pupils' needs in terms of ICT. We have recently installed Fronter, our virtual learning environment which would enable year five and six to have access to a range of learning at home as well as at school. It would also enable the older children to communicate across both schools.
- With Fronter we can use webcams so that we can deliver a specific lesson in one classroom which can be seen on another base or indeed at the other school as we have a virtual 'shared corridor'.

## **WHY NOW?**

### **Area review**

- Both schools are aware that the area of South Somerset is to be reviewed in terms of provision in education
- The headteacher of both our schools is involved in meetings with the other local headteachers in discussing the future of education for this area, and she would like to continue to be part of that decision making process. However, the discussions and the ideas are at the very early stages.
- If our schools waits for the conclusion of the review to be decided, and any changes to take place, our numbers will be so small that we will be very vulnerable. It may not be possible to sustain our schools in the future, and we may be at risk of losing one if not more of our school sites.
- Somerset Local Authority considers any school with sixty pupils or less on role to fall into the 'Small school strategy'. This will mean that the school will be subject to a review.
- Our schools would run the risk of losing the leadership and management role currently played by the headteacher and governing bodies, which would be a great loss to the whole community.

## HOW WILL THIS AFFECT MY FAMILY?

### Parental Choice

- Both schools recognise that parental choice is affecting our numbers in that there is a number of families who are opting into the primary system at various stages of their children's education. This is causing instability in our numbers and our funding
- By changing our status to primary we are increasing parental choice for the education of their children

### Potential Problems

The school recognise that in any change to a school there will be challenges that will arise. The headteacher, the governors and the staff feel that the positive outcomes for our proposal far outweigh any problems.

Problems that we are aware of are

- Transport. Our proposal will allow parents to make a choice in their education for their children. This will mean that transport will be needed from our villages to secondary schools. This will be taken up with the Local Authority.
- Uniform. There will be a time of change over for the uniform to allow for possibly a new logo and change of words
- Parking - increased numbers will mean increased cars. Any actions taken to reduce traffic will be incorporated into the School Travel Plans. One possibility is staggered start times.

## CONCLUSION

Both our schools know that we are good schools who can meet the needs of year five and six pupils. We have a strong vision and ethos which brings success and therefore we should be allowed to expand to meet parental demands and enable parents to have a choice. All aspects of governance, administration and the curriculum are considered under the Every Child Matters Agenda. We know we can boost standards and opportunities in the area and meet parental needs. The schools are already achieving high standards and the year five and six children will benefit from the high expectations and staff expertise.

The current headteacher has experience of leading a successful primary school in a village setting. The proposal is unanimously supported by all governors of St Mary and St Peter's Church of England School and Shepton Beauchamp Church of England School

St. Mary's and St. Peter's Church of England School and Shepton Beauchamp Church of England School will form a learning partnership to ensure high standards and a wide range of opportunities for all children.

## HOW DO I RESPOND TO THE CONSULTATION?

We would like to hear your views on our consultation, and request that you respond in writing to the Chair of Governors at either one of the following schools.

Caroline Ireland-Jones  
Chair of Governors  
St Mary & St Peters CE VC First School  
Water Street  
Barrington  
Ilminster  
Somerset  
TA19 0JR

Revd Geoff Wade  
Chair of Governors  
Shepton Beauchamp CE VC First School  
Church Street  
Shepton Beauchamp  
Ilminster  
Somerset  
TA19 0LQ

Telephone Barrington Base 01460 52266  
Telephone Ilton Base 01460 52574

Telephone 01460 240793

Or email [sch.023@educ.somerset.gov.uk](mailto:sch.023@educ.somerset.gov.uk) - (St Mary & St Peters)

[office@sheptonbeauchamp.somerset.sch.uk](mailto:office@sheptonbeauchamp.somerset.sch.uk) - (Shepton Beauchamp)

Please include your own email address if replying in this way.

All responses will be considered and a decision taken on whether to publish formal proposals.

### **CLOSING DATE FOR RESPONSES IS 14 NOVEMBER 2008**

Alternatively you may choose to use the reply slip below.

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Name: .....

Address: .....

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I do support the consultation

I do not support the consultation

Reasons for this are:

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